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## Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

### **2 a.m. at the Cat's Pajamas** by Marie-Helene Bertino

#### Summary

On the streets of Philadelphia, on the night before Christmas Eve, three people will discover the potential for their hopes and happiness.

#### Discussion Questions

1. As this story opens, Madeleine appears to be a big problem in the neighborhood and at school. Did you find you felt a little hostile to this child for the first chapter or two?
2. What's the history on Mrs. Santiago and why does she (as others in the community) feel it incumbent upon herself to take care of Madeleine?
3. Where would Madeleine be without her community of parents? Why don't some of these people, who seem to feel responsible for her, attempt to reach her father through his grief?
4. There are so many different ways to cherish the memories of people we've lost. What do you think of Madeleine's? Of her father's? Madeleine's father is so depressed by the loss of the woman he loved, he cannot function. Do you admire this, or do you feel he is being self-indulgent? Discuss.
5. Why does Sarina feel socially inadequate? She is educated, well-travelled, a professional. Does her sense of inadequacy spring from her marriage or is she someone who does not recognize her own worth?
6. Where do you think Louisa is heading? She's a minor character, but she loves Lorca and loves his son, too. Do you feel there might be something there to hold them together?

*"Don't mind Louisa," Vince says." She's going through a transitional period. From bartender to question mark." (p. 56)*

7. Where would you classify this story vis a vis genre: Magical realism? Surrealism? Gritty realist? Humor?

8. What did you think of the playlist for this book (for this is really a story of love and music)? Are you a jazz fan?
9. Do you wish the author had included an appendix with all of the mom's life recipes?

Discussion Questions from the Daughters of Penelope Foundation, Inc.  
([dopfoundationinc.com](http://dopfoundationinc.com))